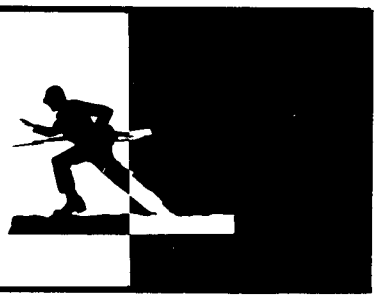
PROFESSIONAL FORUM



U.S. Battalion Operations
In the Multinational Force and Observers

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The multinational force and observers (MFO) on the Sinai peninsula grew out of the peace treaty the Arab Republic of Egypt (ARE) and the state of Israel signed at Camp David, Maryland, in March 1979. That treaty established Zones A, B, and C in the Sinai and Zone D in Israel, with specific limitations on the armed forces, armaments, and equipment that are permitted in each (see map and matrix).

The mission of the MFO is to observe, report, and verify all activities and any potential violations of the 1979 Camp David Accords. To accomplish this mission, the MFO force has about 2,100 service personnel from the 11 nations that contribute to it. Most of this strength comes from the three infantry battalions that are stationed throughout Zone C—one each from Colombia, Fiji, and the United States. Seven other nations—Canada, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay—provide support units and staff personnel to the force. The eleventh nation, Italy, provides the naval contingent, which patrols in the Red Sea and near the Straits of Tiran.

Of the three infantry battalions in Zone C, two operate from North Camp, located near the city of El Gorah, and one (the U.S. battalion) operates from South Camp, near the city of Sharm-el-Sheik at the southern end of the peninsula. Also based at South Camp is the Italian Navy contingent, which mans the MFO coastal patrol unit in the Sharm-el-Sheik harbor, and the Dutch contingent, which provides the military police unit and the communications center personnel. Finally, the camp includes a detachment from the U.S. aviation company, which supports the MFO, as well as a company from the 1st Support Battalion, which provides medical technicians for the camp dispensary and various materiel support.

From August 1991 to February 1992, the United States battalion in the Sinai was the 4th Battalion, 87th Infantry, from the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. The following are some of the lessons the battalion's personnel learned both before and during its deployment.

When a battalion is scheduled to go to the MFO, it may have little or no time to train for its MFO mission. Although the battalion staff may feel that their units should be allowed to train exclusively for their upcoming mission, the higher headquarters may be reluctant to lose up to a third of its combat power to a non-warfighting mission.

Still, there is a period before the battalion goes to exclusive MFO training when it can do some important training for the task force. Here are some ideas for this low-resource training:

Aircraft and Vehicle Recognition. Light infantry units often have a weakness in these areas, because they do not generally train to oppose mechanized or armored forces. With the exception of the NCOs who may have served previously in heavy units, many of the lower ranking enlisted personnel of the battalion may not have had any training on aircraft and vehicle identification since their basic training. This is a skill that the MFO emphasizes, and the training requires almost nothing in material assets.

MFO Recognition Guide. The MFO has its own recognition guide, which has aircraft and vehicles organized by user nation and also includes some MFO-specific items that soldiers must be able to recognize. For the U.S. battalion, key items include the Egyptian Army uniforms, the seven different Egyptian police agencies that may be encountered in the Sinai, and the patrol boats of both Egypt and Israel. The soldiers who are assigned to checkpoints must also become the battalion's experts on Egypt's license

plates. The plates are different colors for military, police, and civilian vehicles, and this is often the only way the soldiers can determine that a vehicle entering Zone C is military and therefore in violation.

Leader Training. Squad leaders should concentrate on leader training, because the entire MFO mission rests upon them; all other elements support the squads out on the remote sites. The squad leaders will be alone and responsible for all activities at a remote site 24 hours a day for 21 days, as well as for the quality of the reports sent to higher headquarters. Although some NCOs may be comfortable with this idea, others may be intimidated by it. This feeling is understandable, because being in an independent command is a great responsibility and not something for which any junior NCO course has prepared them.

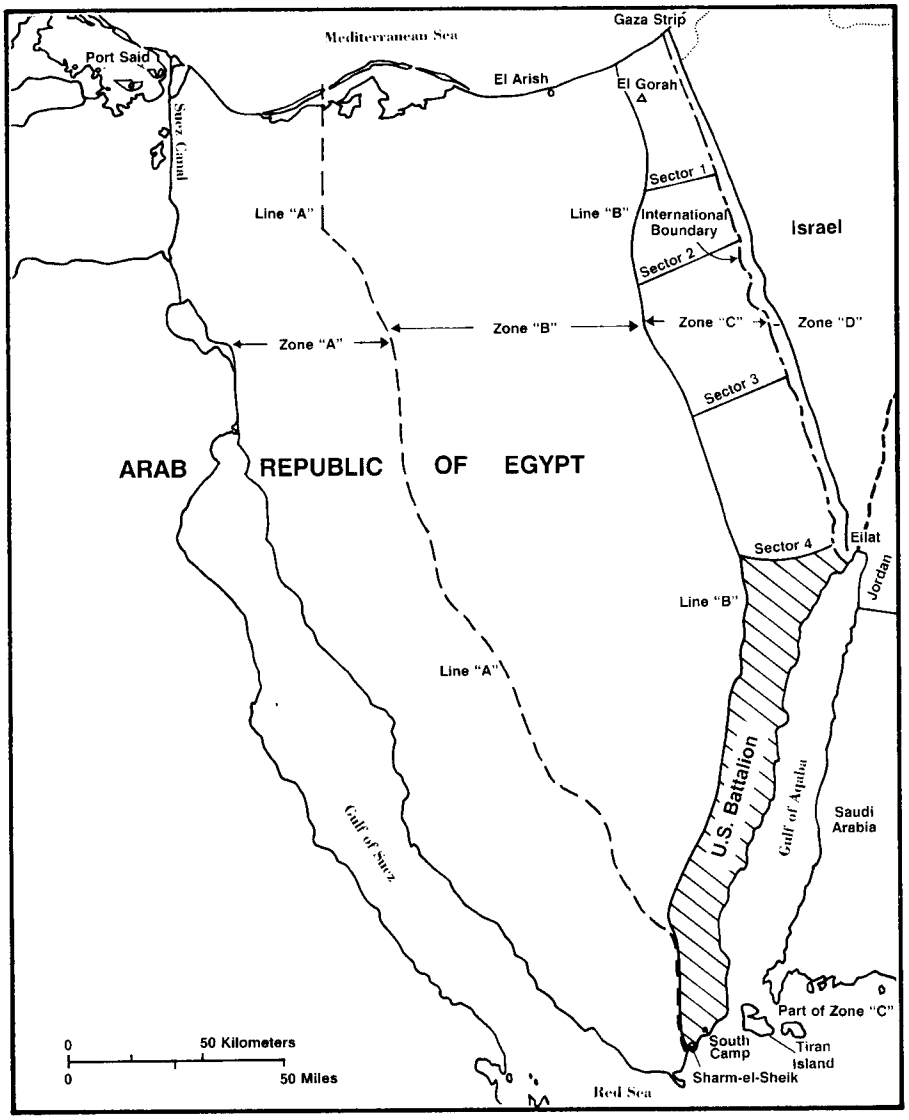
The preparation of the site may focus on making the squad leaders the subject area experts when it comes to the task force SOPs (standing operating procedures), training schedules, and the MFO mission in general. The preparation of a site commander's handover book is a good start in this direction. This book details the layout of the squad leader's specific site; how his squad will rotate and train; what each soldier's job will be on the site (TOC NCO, cook, sanitation specialist, site medic/combat lifesaver, generator mechanic); how the squad will execute its red alert and site evacuation plan; and many other details of running his site. Forcing the squad leader to develop this book early may be a great help in preparing him for his first independent command.

Another tool the battalion can use to prepare the site commanders is the command post exercise (CPX). Since each of the 13 remote sites acts as a separate reporting station, each operates its own TOC 24 hours a day. The TOC receives reports from the site towers and sends reports to the appropriate sector control centers. When a sector control center receives a report from a remote site, it must also send the report to higher headquarters while ensuring that the information in it is accurate, timely, and understandable.

A CPX can be run in a single afternoon. The only material resources required are MFO report formats, TA-1s, and enough wire to connect them while placing each "squad" (actually, just the squad leader and his two team leaders for each site) a short distance from each other. Landlines are run from the squads that will occupy remote sites in the MFO to the squads that will run the sector control centers, and from the three centers to the one battalion TOC. Each site is then given a series of 3x5 index cards that describe situations that may occur there and at what time. As each of these cards is "activated," the squad sends its initial report and describes what it is doing in response to the event. The sector control center then sends its report to the battalion TOC, which may have questions or instructions of its own. (We found it particularly entertaining to role-play the part of the battalion commander at the TOC.)

This CPX then accomplishes two tasks. It familiarizes the site leaders with the appropriate MFO formatted reports of particular events, and it provides a forum for wargaming some of the events that may occur when the battalion assumes its MFO mission. After-action review (AAR) comments from this event proved especially useful when the squad leaders began to train their squads.

Along with these training concerns, the battalion must also consider the



Map of the Sinai

ZONE	TROOPS	TANKS	APCs	VEHICLES	ADA	ARTILLERY	AIRCRAFT	WEAPONS
A	1 MECH DIV; UP TO 22,000 PERSONS	1 BDE UP TO 230 TANKS	UP TO 480 APCs	NOT SPECIFIED	7 ADA BNs UP TO 126 PIECES (237mm)	7 FA BNs UP TO 126 PIECES	COMBAT AIRCRAFT AND RECON FLIGHTS ONLY	NOT SPECIFIED
B	4 BNs (BORDER) UP TO 4,000 PERSONS	NOT ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED	WHEELED (LIGHT)	NOT ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED	UP TO 8 UNARMED TRANSPORT AND UNARMED HELICOPTERS	LIGHT WEAPONS
C	ONLY POLICE AND (MFO) FORCES STATIONED IN ZONE	NOT ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED	LIGHT MFO AND ARE POLICE WHEELED VEHICLES	NOT ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED	UNARMED POLICE HELICOPTERS	ARE POLICE LT WPNS ONLY
D	UP TO 4 IDF INF BNs; UP TO 4,000 PERSONS	NOT ALLOWED	UP TO 180 APCs	NOT SPECIFIED	NOT ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED	COMBAT AIRCRAFT AND RECON FLIGHTS ONLY	NOT SPECIFIED

Matrix showing the forces, armaments, and equipment permitted in each area

family support group and the rear detachment. The men of the battalion will be deployed to the Sinai for six months. During this time, babies will be born, family members will be sick (or may die), and there will be various other family crises as well. To meet these needs, the family support group must be strong, and the rear detachment must be more than just a skeleton crew made up of the battalion cast-offs. *(See also "Family Support Program," by Lieutenant Colonel Marshall L. Helena, INFANTRY, July-August 1990, pages 16-17.)*

Information is the key to coping. Our battalion established regular information briefings for the soldiers' families. These briefings were given near the end of the training day, and the soldiers were released early so they could bring their families. Many of the fears the wives had about the deployment could be alleviated by a knowledge of where their husbands would be, what they would be doing, and how they would be living. Additionally, the key speaker at these briefings was the battalion commander, who not only presented most of the information but answered questions himself. His approach helped quell the rumors that invariably crop up before any major deployment.

Army Community Services (ACS) at Schofield Barracks was probably one of the battalion's biggest assets before its deployment. The ACS staff set up and coordinated group counseling for all the soldiers and their families. The counseling covered everything from financial planning and budget-making to the emotional aspects of deployment. It also included special sessions on how the families could help the children deal with the prolonged absence of their fathers. Any battalion should actively support such ACS programs.

In selecting personnel for the rear detachment, a battalion should keep the following in mind: These are the men who will be the primary link between the home station and the deployed battalion 6,000 miles away. They will be in charge of all personnel actions; they will be the ones to whom the families turn when they need help from the unit; and they will be the ones who prepare for the battalion's return. The unit's best personnel action center NCO should be placed in the rear detachment.

When planning training for the MFO mission itself, the incoming battalion should think about three areas in particular:

Frequent Sightings of Possible Violations. As mentioned earlier, the battalion personnel who occupy checkpoints need to become experts on all aspects of identifying Egypt's vehicles and license plates. Since the 4th Battalion, 87th Infantry, assumed the mission, four confirmed violations of the treaty have dealt with military vehicles entering Zone C in the sector, all of them in the southern portion of the U.S. battalion's sector near two checkpoints on the roads leading into Sharm-el-Sheik from Zone A.

Warship sightings are common in the U.S. sector. Although the actions of warships in the Straits of Tiran do not directly involve either Egypt or Israel, freedom of navigation through the straits is one of the key points of the 1979 treaty. The U.N. fleet activities must therefore be closely observed and tracked, not because they have any direct bearing on the treaty but because one party may claim that the warships of the other are restricting navigation.

The responsibility for observing the fleet falls mainly on the coastal patrol unit run by the Italian contingent. On the other hand, it is not unusual to observe warships of four different nations all enforcing the blockade at the same time, and there is generally only one Italian patrol unit boat on site at any one time.

Aircraft sightings are also relatively common. Both Egypt and Israel have occasionally violated the treaty, either by flying training missions over an MFO site or by landing military aircraft at an airfield in the U.S. battalion sector.

Medical Evacuations. The MFO is committed to conducting medical evacuations of foreign nationals (non-Egyptian) whenever there is a potential loss of life, limb, or eyesight. For all critical cases, these patients are taken to the city of Eilat in Israel, which has the nearest modern facilities. Usually this involves a medical evacuation flight by the aviation detachment; the coordination for and deployment of medical support; coordination for border crossing by an aircraft through the liaison systems of both Israel and Egypt; requesting permission for the flight from Force Operations; monitoring of the flight of the evacuation aircraft; and the actual contacting and treatment of the patient enroute. All this is for a simple medical evacuation. When actually finding the injured personnel becomes a factor, or when it may be a mass casualty situation, things get even more complex.

The 4th Battalion, 87th Infantry, evacuated people for a variety of reasons—diving, mountain climbing, and automobile accidents, and one explosion. Another common source of injuries is SCUBA-diving and snorkeling in the Red Sea.

The crisis action team must be trained to deal with these cases. The team should consist of the battalion commander, executive officer, S-3, S-5, and TOC crews. When the team arrives, it will also include the aviation unit representative and one of the doctors from the dispensary.

Liaison System. The liaison system for Egypt is the U.S. battalion's key host nation contact. The battalion's specific point of contact is an Egyptian Army lieutenant colonel who lives in Sharm-el-Sheik, and good relations with him are very important in many ways. For one telling example, South Camp is about 100 miles from the nearest fresh water source, and this man controls the pipes that carry the water.

The keys to success for a multinational force and observer mission are, therefore, planning, preparation, and training. The battalion that follows these will avoid the mistakes that result from hasty, unplanned action, and will execute its critical MFO missions correctly and effectively the first time, every time.

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Combat Identification

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was prepared by the Infantry School's Directorate of Combat Developments and staffed through other School departments.

During Operation DESERT STORM, the variables that can cloud the battlefield reached an all-time high. Warfare had become so sophisticated and complex that the units involved had a much higher probability of suffering casualties from friendly fire.

The recognition booklets and flash cards once used to teach soldiers silhouette identification shapes were no longer adequate, because specific items of equipment were often common to both friendly and enemy forces. For example, Soviet-designed battle tanks were used by three members of the coalition force as well as by the Iraqis. Carefully planned and timed ground maneuver of the force, although rehearsed repeatedly, did not reduce the risk of fratricide, when targets were often engaged and destroyed before they could be positively identified.

As a result of the air-to-ground fratricide incidents, a multidiscipline center for fratricide technology was established at the U.S. Army Laboratory Command (LABCOM) Advanced Systems Concept Office (ASCO). At the same time, the Army Materiel Command (AMC) was tasked with developing a plan that would focus on the future effort to reduce fratricide and a plan for organizing and managing research and development for fratricide and identification friend or foe (IFF) on a permanent basis.

As AMC was beginning work on the reduction of fratricide, a parallel effort was under way at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). The Army combat identification system (ACIS) concept is the result of that effort. It will attempt to provide the means for positively identifying potential targets as friend, foe, or neutral (noncombatant). Positive identification must be made in real time from any area within a theater of operations, under any condition of terrain and weather, during day or periods of limited visibility (with emphasis on nighttime and dirty battlefields). The ACIS concept covers air-to-air, air-to-ground, ground-to-air, and ground-to-ground combat identification systems. Passive technology will be stressed, with the